

Hawks shooting woes cost them in loss to Routt Catholic

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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JACKSONVILLE - So far the Carrollton Hawks basketball season has been one of growing pains with some ups, but more downs.

There have been games where they came out fast, but couldn't maintain their consistency, or they hung around a good opponent, but couldn't get a key stop defense. Thursday night in Jacksonville the temperature was below 10 degrees and the Hawks shooting was right about there too.

Carrollton came up short to the Routt Catholic Rockets 42-36 in the Routt Dome on Thursday night. The Rockets improve to 3-1 in the WIVC and 9-6 overall. The Hawks drop to 0-2 in conference play and 4-6 overall.

"We struggled mightily in the second and third quarters to put the ball in the in the basket," Carrollton head coach Matt Goetten said. "There were two plays that were indicative of the entire night. The first Gabe Jones misses a layup with no one around him and then under a minute left, we're still in the game, and we give up an offensive rebound on a free-throw. Those two things can never happen."

Coming off a comeback victory on the road to the South County Vipers this past Tuesday, the Hawks gained some much-needed confidence after losing two straight games in the Waverly Holiday Tournament. Coming into the game, they felt good.

"This is one I thought we could win and we came out executing our game plan well. switches into man-to-man, which is what we expected, we planned for and wanted them to play, but went ice cold," Goetten said

Things were looking up as Carrollton when they got out to an 8-4 lead and went on a late 5-0 run to close out the first quarter. That included a slick three-pointer by Ethan Brannan at the buzzer to give the Hawks a 16-11 lead, which was set up by a smart pass from Hunter Flowers where he committed Brannan's defender to him as he drove to the basket, but dished the ball at the last second.

That ended up being the last huge burst of momentum for the Hawks.

In the second quarter, both teams struggled mightily to get points, in particular, Carrollton as they went nearly a full seven minutes without a point. The dry spell was broken by a running floater made by sophomore Jacob Graner, who then gave Carrollton the lead back at 20-19 courtesy of two made free-throws. A Brannan free-throw with seconds remaining put the Hawks up 21-19 at halftime.

The third quarter was worse for Carrollton because they scored two points by a Nathan Walker layup and the fact that Routt found a bit of a rhythm offensively. Dylan

Marshall scored three points in the quarter, including a mid-range baseline shot give the Rockets a 24-23 lead, which they would not relinquish. He finished with 12 points. Ryan Beckman added another score to put the Rockets up 31-23, which they took into the fourth quarter.

“We just couldn’t find the bottom of the net,” Goetten said of the Hawks shooting woes. “We have guys with the talent and athleticism to get to the rim, but they just chose not to do that tonight.

Routt’s star player and gifted athlete, Drew Winters was saddled with foul trouble all game, thus severely limiting his impact on the game. However, so was Walker for the Hawks who Goetten says is their best defender.

“We’re very aggressive defensively, and that hurt us early because Nathan spent the first half on the bench, but I felt good at where we were with Nathan only have played two minutes, and he’s our defensive stopper.”

Carrollton started to come alive, especially Brannan. He scored on a back-door cut to the basket to put the Hawks to within six, and after Carrollton got down to their most significant deficit 34-25, he scored again to get them within seven. He finished with a game-high 14 points.

With just over four minutes to play, Routt decided to shorten the game by spacing out and shooting only layups. After almost a minute went off the clock, Gabe Jones got a steal and moments later Brannan collected a pass under the basket, flipped the ball high off the goal and somehow the ball went in as he got fouled for a three-point play.

Carrollton didn’t waste much time to foul and get Routt into the bonus, and the strategy paid as the Rockets made one of two shots shortly after Jones made a contested layup to put the Hawks to within three at 35-32 with 1:21 to play. The Hawks fouled Marshall and missed his first free throw, and that gave the Hawks a golden chance to tie or pull the score to within one, however, the opportunity was not taken.

With just under a minute to play the Hawks had inbounds pass underneath the basket that was intended as a lob pass to Jones, but it was short and intercepted by Lucas May. He then drove coast-to-coast and was fouled just as he attempted a layup, and it went in. To add insult to injury, May’s ensuing free-throw was rebounded by Beckman, and the Hawks had to foul him. He promptly made both shots to give the Rockets a 39-32 lead on a four-point trip with 45 seconds to play and the Hawks ultimately never covered.

At 7 p.m. Saturday, Carrollton plays the Triopia Trojans in the Winchester Invitational Tournament.



